

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus that can
5 include a plurality of applications, the image forming
apparatus comprising:

a displaying part displaying a screen used
for selecting an application on an operation display
part of the image forming apparatus; and

10 an assigning part assigning a selected
application that is selected on the screen to a
function key when the function key is pushed for the
selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a
15 user to select and execute an application from a
plurality of applications.

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2. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein the function key is a hardware key.

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3. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein the function key is a software key
that is displayed on the operation display part of the
5 image forming apparatus.

10 4. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein assignment by the assigning part is
performed when the image forming apparatus is in a mode
for assigning the selected application to the function
key.

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5. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
20 claim 1, wherein, when assignment of the selected
application is performed, the image forming apparatus
displays a guidance screen indicating an operation of
the function key on the operation display part of the
image forming apparatus.

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6. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
5 claim 5, wherein the guidance screen includes an image
of an operation panel of the image forming apparatus
and an image for guiding a user to the function key.

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7. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein, when assignment of the selected
application is performed, the image forming apparatus
15 displays a screen indicating the number of applications
assigned to the function key.

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8. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 7, wherein, when the function key is pushed for
the selected application, the image forming apparatus
displays a screen indicating that the function key
25 cannot be assigned to the selected application if the

number of applications assigned to the function key
already reaches a limit number.

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9. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, the assigning part including:

a part obtaining a function key ID
10 corresponding to the pushed function key; and
a part storing an application ID of the
selected application and the obtained function key ID
in which the application ID is associated with the
function key ID.

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10. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
20 claim 9, wherein, in addition to the function key ID,
the image forming apparatus stores extension key IDs
for identifying a plurality of applications assigned to
the function key.

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11. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein, when a function key to which a
5 plurality of applications are assigned is pushed, the
image forming apparatus displays a screen including the
names of the plurality of applications for a user to
select one application from the plurality of
applications.

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12. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
15 claim 11, wherein the image forming apparatus displays
application status for each of the plurality of
applications.

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13. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein the image forming apparatus selects
one application from a plurality of applications
25 according to a number of times a user pushes a function

key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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14. The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein the image forming apparatus selects one application from a plurality of applications in which the one application corresponds to an extension key ID that is the same as a number of times a user pushes the function key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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15. A method used for assigning an application to a function key in an image forming apparatus that can include a plurality of applications, the method comprising the steps of:

displaying a screen used for selecting an application on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus; and

25 assigning a selected application that is

selected on the screen to a function key when the
function key is pushed for the selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a
user to select and execute an application from a
5 plurality of applications.

10 16. The method as claimed in claim 15,
wherein the function key is a hardware key.

15 17. The method as claimed in claim 15,
wherein the function key is a software key that is
displayed on the operation display part of the image
forming apparatus.

20 18. The method as claimed in claim 15,
25 wherein the step of assigning is performed when the

image forming apparatus is in a mode for assigning the selected application to the function key.

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19. The method as claimed in claim 15,
wherein, when assignment of the selected application is performed, the image forming apparatus displays a
10 guidance screen indicating an operation of the function key on the operation display part of the image forming apparatus.

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20. The method as claimed in claim 19,
wherein the guidance screen includes an image of an operation panel of the image forming apparatus and an
20 image for guiding a user to the function key.

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21. The method as claimed in claim 15,

wherein, when assignment of the selected application is performed, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating the number of applications assigned to the function key.

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22. The method as claimed in claim 21,
10 wherein, when the function key is pushed for the selected application, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key
15 already reaches a limit number.

20 23. The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein, in the step of assigning, the image forming apparatus obtains a function key ID corresponding to the pushed function key; and stores an application ID of the selected application and the obtained function
25 key ID in which the application ID is associated with

the function key ID.

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24. The method as claimed in claim 23,
wherein, in addition to the function key ID, the image
forming apparatus stores extension key IDs for
identifying a plurality of applications assigned to the
10 function key.

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25. The method as claimed in claim 15,
wherein, when a function key to which a plurality of
applications are assigned is pushed, the image forming
apparatus displays a screen including the names of the
plurality of applications for a user to select one
20 application from the plurality of applications.

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26. The method as claimed in claim 25,

wherein the image forming apparatus displays
application status for each of the plurality of
applications.

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27. The method as claimed in claim 15,
wherein the image forming apparatus selects one
10 application from a plurality of applications according
to a number of times a user pushes a function key to
which the plurality of applications are assigned within
a time period.

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28. The method as claimed in claim 24,
wherein the image forming apparatus selects one
20 application from a plurality of applications in which
the one application corresponds to an extension key ID
that is the same as a number of times a user pushes the
function key to which the plurality of applications are
assigned within a time period.

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29. A computer program for causing an image
5 forming apparatus to assign an application to a
function key, in which the image forming apparatus can
include a plurality of applications, the computer
program comprising:

displaying program code means for displaying
10 a screen used for selecting an application on an
operation display part of the image forming apparatus;
and

assigning program code means for assigning a
selected application that is selected on the screen to
15 a function key when the function key is pushed for the
selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a
user to select and execute an application from a
plurality of applications.

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30. The computer program as claimed in claim
25 29, wherein the function key is a hardware key.

5 31. The computer program as claimed in claim
29, wherein the function key is a software key that is
displayed on the operation display part of the image
forming apparatus.

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32. The computer program as claimed in claim
29, wherein assignment by the assigning program code
15 means is performed when the image forming apparatus is
in a mode for assigning the selected application to the
function key.

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33. The computer program as claimed in claim
29, wherein the assigning program code means displays a
guidance screen indicating an operation of the function
25 key on the operation display part of the image forming

apparatus.

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34. The computer program as claimed in claim 33, wherein the guidance screen includes an image of an operation panel of the image forming apparatus and an image for guiding a user to the function key.

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35. The computer program as claimed in claim 15 29, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating the number of applications assigned to the function key.

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36. The computer program as claimed in claim 35, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be 25 assigned to the selected application if the number of

applications assigned to the function key already
reaches a limit number.

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37. The computer program as claimed in claim
29, the assigning program code means including:

program code means for obtaining a function
10 key ID corresponding to the pushed function key; and
program code means for storing an application
ID of the selected application and the obtained
function key ID in which the application ID is
associated with the function key ID.

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38. The computer program as claimed in claim
20 37, wherein, in addition to the function key ID, the
assigning program code means stores extension key IDs
for identifying a plurality of applications assigned to
the function key.

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39. The computer program as claimed in claim
29, the computer program further comprising displaying
5 program code means for, when a function key to which a
plurality of applications are assigned is pushed,
displaying a screen including the names of the
plurality of applications for a user to select one
application from the plurality of applications.

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40. The computer program as claimed in claim
15 39, wherein the displaying program code means displays
application status for each of the plurality of
applications.

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41. The computer program as claimed in claim
29, the computer program further comprising program
code means for selecting one application from a
25 plurality of applications according to a number of

times a user pushes a function key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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42. The computer program as claimed in claim 38, the computer program further comprising program code means for selecting one application from a plurality of applications in which the one application corresponds to an extension key ID that is the same as a number of times a user pushes the function key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

20 43. A computer readable medium storing a computer program for causing an image forming apparatus to assign an application to a function key, in which the image forming apparatus can include a plurality of applications, the computer program comprising:

25 displaying program code means for displaying

a screen used for selecting an application on an
operation display part of the image forming apparatus;
and

assigning program code means for assigning a
5 selected application that is selected on the screen to
a function key when the function key is pushed for the
selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a
user to select and execute an application from a
10 plurality of applications.

15 44. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 43, wherein the function key is a hardware key.

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45. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 43, wherein the function key is a software key
that is displayed on the operation display part of the
image forming apparatus.

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46. The computer readable medium as claimed
5 in claim 43, wherein assignment by the assigning
program code means is performed when the image forming
apparatus is in a mode for assigning the selected
application to the function key.

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47. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 43, wherein the assigning program code means
15 displays a guidance screen indicating an operation of
the function key on the operation display part of the
image forming apparatus.

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48. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 47, wherein the guidance screen includes an
image of an operation panel of the image forming
25 apparatus and an image for guiding a user to the

function key.

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49. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 43, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating the number of applications assigned to the function key.

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50. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 49, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number.

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51. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 43, the assigning program code means

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including:

program code means for obtaining a function
key ID corresponding to the pushed function key; and

program code means for storing an application
5 ID of the selected application and the obtained
function key ID in which the application ID is
associated with the function key ID.

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52. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 51, wherein, in addition to the function key
ID, the assigning program code means stores extension
15 key IDs for identifying a plurality of applications
assigned to the function key.

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53. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 43, the computer program further comprising
displaying program code means for, when a function key
to which a plurality of applications are assigned is
25 pushed, displaying a screen including the names of the

plurality of applications for a user to select one application from the plurality of applications.

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54. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 53, wherein the displaying program code means displays application status for each of the plurality of applications.

15 55. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 43, the computer program further comprising program code means for selecting one application from a plurality of applications according to a number of times a user pushes a function key to which the
20 plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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56. The computer readable medium as claimed
in claim 52, the computer program further comprising
program code means for selecting one application from a
plurality of applications in which the one application
5 corresponds to an extension key ID that is the same as
a number of times a user pushes the function key to
which the plurality of applications are assigned within
a time period.

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